

## **Introduction to World Literature at Lillian Osborne, 2010-2011**

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### **A study of World Literature makes up Part 1 of our IB Syllabus:**

World Literature novels studied:

1. Heinrich Boll: *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum*
2. Gabriel Garcia Marques: *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*
3. Harry Mulisch: *The Assault*

IB assessments: Student write two World Literature papers, each worth 10% of their final IB English mark:

1. A comparative study of two (or three) of the three novels listed above.
2. Another comparative study of other world literature texts from our syllabus, imaginative/creative response, or detailed study.

Lillian Osborne assessments (all in preparation for IB assessment activities):

1. Participation in discussion forum
2. Participation in evening sessions
3. Contributions to collaborative documents
4. Presentations
5. Contributions to wiki

The World Literature texts are studied in Year 1 of the IB Program, to allow for work on the world literature papers to be initiated early. This will allow students time to concentrate on these tasks, and to then set them aside for a final review before they are submitted to the IB Organization for assessment.

Each of the world literature texts chosen represents a different place (Germany, Colombia, and Holland). During the study of these works, discussion and research on the cultures from these areas will help us generate international and political focuses, to supplement our literary focus on the craft of the writer.

Because we are exploring a course format that extends our time and place of study beyond the traditional classroom schedule times and walls, we look forward to interacting with a broad range of supplementary resources and engaging (I hope!) in communications with mentors with whom we might not before have had opportunity to connect.

These three texts were chosen for their interconnectivity in a variety of different areas. These connections should provide room for students to be able to identify a diverse range of topics for their world literature papers. These connections include,

but are not limited to: structural challenges, blurring of factual and fictional boundaries, fate versus freewill, broken relationships and the impact of the damage, the significance of setting, the distortion of truth, imagery, the impact of the media and propaganda, the role of women, the significance of places of abode, the role of the macabre, the role of the villain, and mob mentality and the role of the crowd.

Through the study of each literary work, students will increase independence in the areas of information search (Kuhlthau, 2004) and the ability to construct new knowledge from several inputs.

Through “gradual release of responsibility” (Harvey and Daniels, 2009), students will work with preselected models, be engaged in guided practice of new inquiry processes, as well as collaborative practice of these processes, and then move towards more independent practice, and final application within their World Literature Paper 1 assignments. Student work will be archived on and linked to from within a class wiki, linked to from our class website.

Beyond the immediate study of world literature, this course will empower students to “learn how to learn”, thus honing their traits as outlined in the IB Learner Profile (See <http://www.ibo.org/programmes/profile/>). IB learners strive to be:

- inquirers
- knowledgeable
- thinkers
- communicators
- principled
- open-minded
- caring
- risk-takers
- balanced
- reflective

## **A Framework to Maximize Success!**

### **Students: How can you excel?**

1. Don’t get behind – make this course a priority in your schedule. A small time investment of 20 minutes each day, in addition to time reading the novels, should keep you on track.
2. Make your presence known online! Participate with passion and insight!
3. Learn to look *beyond* Wikipedia and Google searches for your information searching. Attend an Information Search Process session in September to learn how to do this.
4. Talk about the books as much as you can, in person with each other, as well as with your teachers – and share your learnings in the discussion forum.
5. Ask questions, online and in person, and be sure to visit me regularly!

**Parents: How can you help?**

Please ensure your son/daughter is aware of and follows through with the commitment required to learn the most from this online course:

1. Ensure your son/daughter is participating: Students need to spend regular time on the course website, contributing to the discussions evolving there. A suggested time, as we start, is 20 minutes per evening. This is in addition to any time spent reading the novel itself.
2. Ensure your son/daughter is reading: Students need to be prepared for any group work by completing all readings in advance. The quality of our collective work is dependent upon the strength of our background knowledge, so students must not get behind in their reading. Readings will be of the novels, related works – websites, criticisms, etc., and online discussions among Lillian Osborne students and with students from other high schools.
3. Support and help your son/daughter as s/he develops database search abilities:
  - a. I recommend that students have at their side the password information to access My Library, where Edmonton Public Schools links to searches of databases to which they are subscribed.
  - b. I also recommend students have at their side their password to the Edmonton Public Library, home of several more worthwhile databases.
  - c. Finally, I recommend that parents work with students to familiarize themselves as well with the wide range of resources available through these two superb information portals. There will be evening Information Search Process sessions provided at the school later in September. Students and parents are welcome to attend.
4. Help us make connections! Are you familiar with these novels? The authors? The history and/or political background of any of the books? Do you know anyone who has expertise in these areas? Please let me know and we can set up some face-to-face or virtual encounters with experts, to broaden our sense of the milieu in which each of these books was written.

**What our “classroom” will look like:**

Our virtual classroom will have several “spaces” within it:

1. The class website – assignments, deadlines, support resources
2. Diigo – an online resource management tool that we can use to share online resources with each other easily.
3. Google Docs – a collaborative work-in-progress place
4. The online community – where we network – discussion forums, blogs, etc.
5. E-Live – an online tool that lets us present and interact with each other live, online.
6. Wikispaces – where we publish our work within a single resource package
7. Last, but not least, our physical gathering place is the Lillian Osborne Library.

## Getting Started

Heinrich Boll. *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum*.

Study of this novel will serve four purposes:

1. to broaden our sense of post-World-War-II Europe, from a literary perspective, and in particular, to scrutinize the types of interactions that take place in the novel to see how and why such interactions are possibly as common today as they were in the 1970s.
2. to broaden our sense of the function of narrative and the craft of story-telling – to gain an appreciation of and a vocabulary with which to discuss the structure and style of this modern novel.
3. to set in place and familiarize students with a framework of inquiry, which will provide them with step-by-step support through the learning process as they hone their own reflective, metacognitive skills.
4. to provide students with practise collaborating in the sharing of knowledge developed in areas relating to the study of this novel and in the building of new views of the novel that reflect students' synthesis of their learnings using a variety of media formats. Knowledge shared will form one section of a resource that will be used as a reference later on when students begin to grow their independent inquiry in their World Literature Paper 1 assignments.

By the end of this novel study, students will have moved along the inquiry path, within a more structured environment. As we expand our study into a study of the other World Literature novels, students, in consultation with me, will be able to use their evolving familiarity with the inquiry process and their practical compilation of ideas collected so far to inform areas for subsequent focus. Each novel study thus grows out of the one before, challenging students to practise the process of reading and knowledge-building in increasingly more independent ways.

All information relating to each of the novels studies will be posted on the web:

- Your main starter page is our World Literature Class website:  
<https://sites.google.com/a/share.epsb.ca/loworldliterature/>
- Your next significant home on the web for the *Lost Honor of Katharina Blum* is our Katharina Blum wiki:  
<http://losthonorofkatharinablum.wikispaces.com/>
- Also, you will spend significant amounts of time conversing on the Lillian Osborne World Literature Community site at <http://lillianosborne.ning.com> . The Katharina Blum section is the Discussion Forum, here:  
<http://lillianosborne.ning.com/forum/categories/the-lost-honour-of-katharina/listForCategory>

Students' work will evolve on these websites, and elsewhere. Parents are encouraged to explore the sites and keep informed of our progress through our novel studies. On Monday, September 19, a formal evening introduction and orientation to World Literature at Lillian Osborne is planned. It will start at 7:00 p.m. in the library. All interested people are welcome to join us.